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# British Christianity during the Roman Occupation

BY

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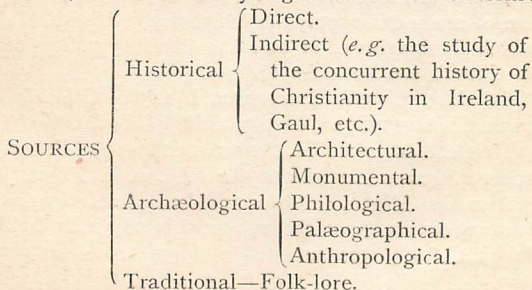
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## British Christianity during the Roman Occupation

THE object of this paper is to present an intelligible idea of Christianity in Britain during the Roman occupation; that is to say (speaking roughly), during the first four centuries of the Christian era. The endeavour will be made to disentangle from a mass of legend, which Celtic patriotism or controversial zeal has hugged, the meagre scraps of real history for which we are indebted to foreign rather than to native historians.

A bitter wail has reverberated from the first to the last of the writers of our soil, from the British Gildas of the sixth century to Professor Bright of to-day, that native contemporary records are non-existent, that the first planting of the faith is unknown.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A really exhaustive study might take some such form as—





The plan here adopted is, to begin with the earliest available evidence of the *settled* condition of the British Church, namely, the presence of three British bishops at the Synod of Arles (A.D. 314).<sup>1</sup> This will serve as a chronological *point d'appui* from which to proceed, first onward to the end of the proposed period, and then backward, till we arrive at the vanishing point of anything like British history, which we believe to be coincident with the origin of British Christianity.

The Council of Arles (= Arelate, a chief city of Gallia Narbonensis, about twenty miles from the mouth of the Rhone) was summoned by Constantine, at the instance of the Donatists, to re-hear the case against Cæcilian, Bishop of Carthage. It will be remembered that this Council was held almost immediately after the establishment of Christianity by the Emperor, and that it was the first Council attended by British bishops. The

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Such a scheme, though not absolutely logical in its divisions, might subserve precision of method. But no system of study can supply the deficiency of historical data, for which foreign invasion and the effacing policy of the Latin Church are both responsible.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Labbe, *Concil. Sacrosanct.* i. 1430. *Collectio conciliorum Gallie* (1789). Dupin, *Hist. of Eccles. Writers*, i. 596. Hefele, *Hist. of the Ch. Councils*, i. 180-199. Especially, München, *Bonner Zeitschrift für Phil. u. k. Theol.* (Heft 26). Also in Migne, Hardouin, Mansi, and Sirmondus. The references are given throughout this paper to facilitate the labours of any who may desire to prosecute the present enquiry.

Bishop of Rome was not present, but was represented. Marinus, Bishop of Arles, would seem to have presided, if the synodical letter to Bishop Silvester, which is reputed to have been sent by the Council, is genuine.<sup>1</sup> The number present at the Council was probably thirty-three bishops in person, besides deputies and attendant priests and deacons. One bishop was usually summoned to such Synod out of each province, occasionally two.<sup>2</sup> In pursuance of this arrangement, three bishops were sent from Britain, representing the three provinces into which the country was then divided, namely, Eborius, Bishop of York; Restitutus, Bishop of London; and Adelphius (possibly) Bishop of Caerleon-upon-Usk;<sup>3</sup> these

<sup>1</sup> The contents of the letter contain an anachronism which goes far to dispose of its trustworthiness. The words "a te qui majores dioceses tenes" are an absurdity at that date when we remember that at the subsequent Council of Sardica the area of the Pope's action was so much more circumscribed than these words imply. The Sardican bishops thought it right that merely the suburbicary Churches, their brethren in Italy, Sardinia, and Sicily, should learn their decrees through him. Some are of opinion that Chrestus, Bishop of Syracuse, presided.

<sup>2</sup> Ordinarily, the limits of the civil and ecclesiastical province coincided. Exceptions to this rule are given by Duchesne, *Origines du culte Chrétien*, 18.

<sup>3</sup> There is apparently an error in the wording of the title "In civitate Colonia Londinensium." Mr. Haddan (Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, i. 7) would read "Legionensium," and draws attention to the probable adjustment of British bishoprics to the Roman provinces in Britain and their



three towns being respectively the capitals of Maxima Cæsariensis, Britannia prima and Britannia secunda. The bishops were accompanied by Sacerdos a presbyter, and Arminius a deacon, a circumstance which establishes the threefold order of the Christian ministry at that period in Britain ; whilst the same fact is established for the other Western Churches from the Canons of this very Council which relate to bishops, priests, and deacons.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, at the beginning of the fourth century the Church in this country is organized ; the British bishops were thought worthy of the summons of the Emperor who at the moment assumed the

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capitals, as above noticed. In an article by the same writer contributed to the *British Remembrancer* (xlii. 441) he remarks that the external evidence from the unbroken tradition which names Caerleon as the third British archiepiscopal See seems conclusive. To this may be added that Caerleon is the traditional site of martyrdoms very little earlier than this date. Others identify this third See with Colchester, Maldon, Lincoln, Richborough, etc.; cf. *Chronicles of the Anc. Brit. Ch.* p. 58, and Bright, *Early Engl. Ch. Hist.* p. 9. The latter writer notes that the Irish Nennius gives the name *Caer Lonin* to Caerleon. On the other hand, Mr. Haverfield thinks the suggestion *Legionensium* wholly inadmissible, as Caerleon was never a colony (*Engl. Hist. Review*, July 1896). Mr. Willis Bund questions (1) whether Londinensium is wrong ; (2) whether it = Legionensium ; (3) whether Legionensium = Caerleon. *Celtic Churches of Wales*, 249. Cf. however, Gildas, 8, and *Mon. Hist. Brit.* 8.

<sup>1</sup> See *Canons* 20 and 21, thus headed :—" Ut sine tribus episcopis nullus episcopus ordinetur." " Ut presbyteri aut diaconi qui ad alia se transferunt deponantur."

position of supreme head of the Church. They took their part in rank with the Churches of Gaul, Italy, Sicily, Spain, Sardinia, and Africa, at a Synod which Augustine designates as "*plenarium ecclesiæ universæ concilium*;"<sup>1</sup> their succession is undisputed, their authority unquestioned, their subscription duly registered. Indeed the admission of these British bishops on terms of equality with those of the Churches of all the provinces which then constituted the empire of Constantine renders indisputable their claim to episcopal authority by due succession from the Apostles, whatever were the line of transmission. How carefully the Church of that date guarded the episcopal succession is evinced by the twentieth Canon of this Council of Arles, which enacts "that no bishop ought to ordain another without having seven, or at least three bishops to assist him in the consecration."

Another point to observe is, that at that time the Western Churches were independent of Rome. Not only was this Council the result of an appeal from the decision of a council of eighteen bishops held the previous year in the Lateran under the presidency of Pope Miltiades, but the decrees of the Council of Arles were sent to the Pope to be promulgated, not, as interested writers would have it, to be confirmed.

It would have been needless to add that the

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 43, vii. 19. Augustine is here referring to the Western, not to the universal Church.



deputation from Britain was representative of the whole British Church had it not been disputed in an able paper read before the Cymmrodorion Society in 1894.<sup>1</sup> There were probably no more than these three bishops at that time in Britain,<sup>2</sup> and there is no *proof* that any had preceded them. Such names however as St. Mellon and St. Augulus figure in martyrology and may have a title to history. The same lecturer makes a precarious argumentative use of the Latin names of the three British bishops sent to the Council of Arles. He thinks that the Latin nomenclature *Eborius*, *Restitutus*, *Adelfius*, is evidence that these bishops were Roman as distinct from Celtic or British, and thus he finds an element in his contention that the Church was then the Church of the resident Roman population, not of the people of Britain. Leaving for the present the conclusion at which he arrives, this portion of his argument is not convincing, for (a) Eborius is a Celtic term with a classical termination, as would be natural in an official document of the New State Church. It appears under the forms Ebur, Ibar, Ivor, Ywor, and Efrog. Adelfius is supposed by Mr. Rees (*Welsh Saints*) to be identical with Cadfrawd; while Restitutus has been referred to St. Rystad, a name which also occurs as that of a British prince. (b) Celtic names are found with their

<sup>1</sup> By Professor Hugh Williams, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> This view is disputed by Professor Collins.

Latin equivalents during and long after the Roman occupation. Thus—Sechnall = Secundinus, Ferghall = Virgilius, Finian = Vinnianus, Ceredig = Coroticus(?), St. Bleiddian = Lupus, Elfod = Elbodugus, St. Maws = Machutus. Moreover whole catalogues of names of British cities are published with their Latin equivalents.<sup>1</sup> All this would be unimportant were it not that it is of interest to know whether the Gospel to any appreciable extent overflowed the channel of the Latin-speaking inhabitants which flowed through Romanized cities situate on Roman high-roads; in other words, whether we are justified in speaking at this period of a native British Church. The names of the traditional martyrs, Julius, Aaron, Albanus, are certainly not British. Whatever slight remains of early British Christianity are discovered are found in Roman stations, as will presently be shown.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand the beginnings of Christianity in Gaul point to efforts among the native population; whilst the sympathies of Christian emigrants from Gaul would naturally be evoked in the direction of their neighbours of kindred extraction; sympathies which could not fail to be enhanced after the first visible token of corporate unity at the Arles

<sup>1</sup> In Cornwall, among the earliest monumental examples, Celtic names mingle with Roman. Cf. J. T. Blight, *Anc. Crosses and other Antiq. in the E. of Cornwall*. Haslam, *Perranzabuloe*. Hübner, *Inscr. Chr. Brit.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gale, *Hist. Brit. Scriptor*, 135. Gunn, *Nennius*, 97. *Engl. Hist. Review*, 1895, x. 710.



Council. Some definite idea of a Catholic Church would then be formed as distinct from one that was insular; some notion of the inter-relations of the body and its members. What interchange too of thought! What opportunity of studying Gallican as well as Italian and Spanish use! What preparation it afforded of grasping that far wider idea of the Universal Church which the great and subsequent events, at a distance of eleven years, could not fail to suggest! History furnishes little assistance at this period. Arnobius (A.D. 303), one of the keenest of the Apologists, admires the rapidity with which the Word of God had reached the Indians in the East and the Britons in the West (in Psal. 147). The testimony of Lactantius (A.D. 313) is too general in its statements as to the victories of Christianity to draw any certain inference; whilst the rhetorical language of Eusebius will be treated presently when considering the probable *origines* of British Christianity. We could wish that there were material for deciding whether the British Church was represented at that momentous gathering, the Council of Nicæa in Bithynia (A.D. 325). The extant subscriptions do not discover representatives as present; but the lists are incomplete. It was Constantine's desire that all the bishops of the Church should be present; a general summons was issued, expenses were paid, the *classis Romana* would be at hand, and the post-horse system bidden to afford all

facility.<sup>1</sup> Eusebius states that those who were summoned came. The Emperor's words are, "The Bishops of Italy and from the rest of the countries of Europe are coming."<sup>2</sup> Selden (in Eutych. 117-123) laid stress on the argument from analogy. They went, says he, to the Councils of Sardica and Ariminum subsequently, and to that of Arles previously; why then should they be left out here?

And yet, it may be asked, was Britain likely at this date to have been interested or concerned in the sphere of oriental metaphysics? There had been as yet no precedent for their undertaking such a journey into another quarter of the globe, and for taking part in a conference of which the language might be unintelligible. Eusebius' words respecting the universality of the invitation are discounted by his regarding, in the same context, Gaul (not Britain) and Persia as the Dan and Beersheba of the Churches of the time; whilst a statement of Gelasius, that the copies of the Canons, instead of being carried back by the bishops as in other cases, were, in the case of Britain, carried by two Roman presbyters under the direction of Hosius the famous Bishop of Cordova, who had presided (*cf.* Newman's *Arians*, 257), seems to

<sup>1</sup> All who went were provided with *tractoria*, an imperial letter containing an order to provide travelling necessities. For the form of the document, *cf.* Baronius, *sub* A.D. 314, n. 48. For the Emperor's letter, *cf.* Euseb. *Vit. Const.*, lib. 3, Theodoret, *Eccl. Hist.* i. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Analecta Nicæna*, 21.



negative the presence of British representatives. If the authority of names is to influence, it may be added that Tillemont, Stanley, Haddan, and Bright see no evidence for the presence of British delegates. At the same time, the British bishops even if absent gave in their assent to the Anti-Arian decision and to the Paschal decree of the Nicene Council.<sup>1</sup>

It is again a disputed point whether British bishops were present in person at the Council of Sardica (probably A.D. 343)<sup>2</sup> at which Hosius of Cordova presided. Athanasius includes them in his list of those who adhered to its decisions. He says "there were more than 300 bishops present from the provinces of Egypt, Libya, Italy, Sicily, all Africa, Sardinia, the Spanish, Gallic, and British territories; although, curiously, the letter of the Council which details the represented countries, omits Britain when naming Spain and Gaul."<sup>3</sup> Lingard, who suppresses this difficulty, states that they were present, and makes skilful use of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Euseb. *Vit. Const.* iii. 19; Lloyd, *Hist. Acc. of Ch. Gov.* iii. 4. Haddan and Stubbs, *Counc.* i. 10. A very readable account of the Council will be found in Stanley, *East. Ch.*, pp. 55-185. Cf. also Tillemont, *Hist. of the Arians* (tr. Deacon), ii. 595-691. Briefly in Pusey's *Counc. of the Ch.* 102 ff.

<sup>2</sup> For the date, cf. Smith, *Dic. Chr. Biog.* i. 190 n. Sardica, the modern Sophia in Bulgaria, was on the confines of the eastern and western empires.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Athanasius, *Apolog. contr. Ar.* i. 168.

presumed fact of their presence, in his train of proof that the British bishops looked upon the Bishop of Rome as their head. He tells us rightly, that from their presence two conclusions follow: (1) That the British Church formed an integral part of the universal Church, agreeing in doctrine and discipline with the other Christian Churches. (2) That the acts and declarations of these Councils may be taken as acts and declarations of the British bishops, and therefore as expressions of the belief and practice of the British Church. These postulates he follows up, by quoting a passage from an alleged letter sent by the Fathers of the Sardican Council to Pope Julius, which he translates—"It will be seen to be best and most proper, if the bishops from each particular province make reference (or send information) to their head, that is, to the seat of Peter the Apostle."<sup>1</sup> From this citation he draws the conclusion that the members of the Council, and therefore the British bishops, looked upon the Bishop of Rome as their head, because he was the successor of Peter the Apostle. Without closely criticizing Lingard's rendering, the gist is clear, namely, that it was befitting that the head, the See of St. Peter, should be informed respecting every single province. But there is no ground to infer from this passage the primacy of *jurisdiction* as distinct from that of rank. The letter to the Pope was one of several; the Council

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. and Antiq. of the Angl. Sax. Ch.* i. 339.



addressed letters also to the two Emperors, to the Church of Alexandria, to the Bishops of Egypt and Libya, and an encyclical to "all bishops." The letter to the Pope contained a variety of matter, *e.g.* accepting the Pope's excuse for non-attendance; it provided him with a summary of what was transacted, for example, a re-discussion, by permission of the Emperors, of vexatious Church questions. It contained no hint of papal ratification of its decrees, and, as before noticed, merely charged the Pope with promulgation of the decrees to his suburbicans. Lingard could have made more capital out of Canons 3, 4, and 5 in favour of a limited appellate jurisdiction, on the presumption that the Sardican Canons are genuine; but a close and independent investigation of the matter by Mr. Ffoulkes and Prof. Vincenzi renders this more than doubtful. But it is of the deepest interest to know that the British bishops, whether present or absent, united with the Council in acquitting Athanasius. Well might Hilary of Poitiers (A.D. 358), in a letter from his exile in Phrygia, congratulate the Britons and others on their orthodoxy. He begins thus:—"To the most beloved and blessed brothers and co-bishops of the province of Germania Prima . . . to the clergy of Toulouse, and to the bishops of the provinces of Britain, Hilary, a servant of Christ, eternal salvation in God and our Lord. . . . I congratulate you in having continued in the Lord

uncontaminated and uninjured by any contagion of the detestable heresy" (of Arianism).<sup>1</sup>

In A.D. 359 the Council of Ariminum in Italy was convened by Constantius to decide upon the Arian controversy. About 400 bishops were present, of whom a few were from Britain.<sup>2</sup> In the account given by Sulpicius, we read that to all the bishops the Emperor had ordered provisions and apartments to be given, but this was thought unbecoming by the Aquitanians, Gauls, and Britons, who, refusing the imperial offer, preferred to live at their own expense. Three only from Britain, by reason of poverty, took advantage of the public gift, after rejecting the contribution offered by the rest, thinking it better to burden the exchequer than private individuals.

Much has been made of the supposed heterodoxy of the deputies, Britons of course included ; but it is evident that they were cajoled or terrified into signing a semi-Arian creed through the undue influence of the Emperor Constantius. This is evident from the circumstance that while liberty of action was granted them, the four hundred, with the exception of the eighty Arians, anathematized

<sup>1</sup> Hilary Pictav. *De Synodis*, Prol. § 2.

<sup>2</sup> The number appears understated at "three" by Prof. Bright (*E. E. Ch. H.* 11), and overstated by Archd. Pryce, who speaks of "a large number of British bishops" (*Anc. Brit. Ch.* 99). The words of Sulpicius are, "Tres tantum ex Britannia inopia proprii publico usi sunt, cum oblatam a cæteris conlationem respuissent."—Sulpic. Sever. *Op.* ii. 109.



the doctrine of Arius as well as that of Photinus and Sabellius. And even the mischief of pressure was short-lived, for Hilary soon after states that the acts of the Council were annulled everywhere; and the Pope Liberius declared that those who were duped had returned to the truth. Athanasius too, within a very few years, was able to describe Britain and the other Churches of the West as adhering to the faith of the Council of Nicæa.

An event of far-reaching importance occurred about the year 378, which extended the system of appeals, so as to include Britain. It appears that a Synod, held in Rome, petitioned the Emperor that a bishop, under certain circumstances of contumacy, might be brought to Rome, either by the Prefect of the Prætorium of Italy, or by the Vicarius of the city of Rome. The mention of these coercive civil officials limits the scope of the application to Italy and to Illyricum, which was then administered by the Prefect of Italy. The Emperor not only acceded, but extended the solicited jurisdiction to Britain, Gaul, Spain, and Africa. Thus did the *civil* power by one act vest in the Bishop of Rome a patriarchal jurisdiction over the Western Empire. Mr. Puller, in his interesting work, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome* (p. 159), suggests that the claim of the Roman pontiffs to be successors of St. Peter, may have been a theory devised to give a religious basis to jurisdiction derived from the Emperor; urging, that in the Decretals of the succeeding

Pope Siricius we find a new way of speaking about the privileges supposed to be inherited by the Roman See from St. Peter. But the extended jurisdiction of the papal rescript would find few occasions, if any, for its exercise in remote Britain; and the independence of the British Church is historical. Thus Jerome could write—"One may find the way to heaven with the same ease in Britain as at Jerusalem." And again, "All these Churches (Gaul, Britain, Africa, etc.) worship the same Christ and observe one rule of faith. Neither is the Church of the city of Rome supposed to be different to the rest of Christendom. However, if authority be insisted on, *Orbis major est urbe*; and wherever a bishop is fixed, whether at Rome . . . Rhegium or Alexandria, the character and dignity of the office is identical." <sup>1</sup>

An unexpected side-light is thrown upon the scene at this time which gives an impression of the distinct influence of Christianity in the island. Maximus secured by violence the title of Augustus while in Britain (A.D. 383). But before his usurpation he took care to be baptized; thus did he shield his revolt under cover of baptism. The Church was now felt to be a power. Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, referring to the faith of the British Church, says—"The Britannic Isles have felt the power of the Word, aye and even there are churches built and altars erected." "Whether you

<sup>1</sup> Jerome, *Ep. ci. ad Evangel.* *Ep. xlix. ad Paulin.*



wend your way to the Britannic Isles or sail to the Euxine, men may be heard discussing points of scripture with different voices, but one in belief, with varying tongue but harmonious thought.”<sup>1</sup> Thus at the close of the fourth century is the British Church found pursuing her destiny, and of good report. We leave her at an hour when her dependence upon the Gallican Church has become a significant feature, throwing light upon her origin as well as pointing to a certain lack of individuality of character. For this latter feature becomes more prominent during the first half of the fifth century, and demands most careful observation, as throwing light on the silence of the earlier centuries, and furnishing hints towards a solution of the vexed problem—the origin of the British Church.

Four main theories have been propounded upon the subject, which may be called the Roman, Oriental, Gallican, and Apostolic. And when the field is narrowed to *one* of these sources, the further questions will arise—at what period? and under what circumstances?<sup>2</sup>

[I.] In the case of the *Roman* theory, bias or surmise has largely usurped the sphere of argument. Lingard, a representative advocate, speaking of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chrysost. *Contr. Judæos*, opp. i. 575. Sermon. *de util. lect. script.*

<sup>2</sup> The *four* theories are of course only the most important. One fully realizes with Mr. Newell the embarrassment of the multitude of sources which the fertile imagination of theorists has invented.—*A Hist. of the Welsh Ch.* ch. i.

first three centuries, and admitting the dearth of ancient testimony (*A. S. Ch.* i. 338), says, that the only conclusion to which we can reasonably come is that Christianity existed in Britain on the same footing as in the other western provinces of the empire; if the superiority of the Roman pontiff was admitted or rejected there, the case would be the same here.<sup>1</sup> But surely such a surmise implies some tremendous break in the continuity of British faith and practice which the teaching of history does not justify. As soon as the light of history dawns, the house of cards falls. Gildas (A.D. 560) speaks of the Britons as "*moribus Romanis inimici*" (*ep.* 2). Columbanus took a line not only independent of, but often antagonistic to Rome. Augustine spoke of the British bishops as acting in contrariety not only to Roman use, but to that of the universal Church. Gregory (A.D. 601) entirely ignored the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Skene (*Celtic Scotl.* ii. 6) is of much the same opinion. The recent Jesuit writer, De Smedt, employs careful language in treating of this subject, though naturally from his own point of view. After observing that the successors of St. Peter had, like the prince of the Apostles, an entire consciousness of their prerogatives which were commonly recognized by the rest of the bishops, adds, that in the early centuries they were not clearly formulated into a theoretic principle so as to be incorporated into their common fund of instruction, hence it might have happened that in particular circumstances when they might run counter to subjective prejudices or strong feeling, "*elles aient été passagèrement obscurcies et méconnues.*"—*Revue des Questions Historiques*, Oct. 1891, p. 428.



Celtic bishops when Augustine sought information from him as to the validity of consecration by a single bishop ; and the British bishops in their turn ignored the theory of papal supremacy. It even appears from the *Penitential* of Archbishop Theodore that the validity of British Orders was denied (II. § 9), for the consecration of Chad which had been performed by Wini and two British bishops (A.D. 665) was objected to as irregular or insufficient. Laurentius, the successor of Augustine in the See of Canterbury, wrote to the Irish bishops telling them that *before they were acquainted* with Britain they believed that the Britons walked in the ways of the universal Church, but when they came to know them they thought the Scots (the Irish) must be superior. Somewhat later, Wilfred speaks of the British Church as schismatic and out of communion with Rome ; and Pope Vitalian dubbed them *tares*.<sup>1</sup> In the following century Gregory III. exhorted to the rejection of "Gentile ritual and doctrine of British Missionaries, of false priests and heretics."<sup>2</sup> Doubtless Lingard was influenced by the early writers, Prosper of Aquitaine (middle of fifth century) and Bede, our eighth-century annalist, with both of whom the papal bias is unmistakable.<sup>3</sup> Bede attributed the conversion of Britain to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bede, *H. E.* ii. 4, iii. 29. Eddius, *Vit. S. Wilf.* c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. ad Episc. Bajor.* (*cit.* Haddan and Stubbs, i. 203).

<sup>3</sup> Even Montalembert speaks of the latter as blinded by his passions and prejudices. *Monks of the West*, v. 25.

agency of Bishop Eleutherus during the reigns of Aurelius and Verus (A.D. 161-169). This account will be dealt with presently; suffice it to say here that the existence of the tradition leads us to keep an eye on this particular period as a very marked one in the Christianizing of Britain; so marked, as to render not improbable the invention of a story to divert from Gaul to Rome the honours of a successful mission.<sup>1</sup> There is no allusion to a Roman mission or jurisdiction in the writings of early British Saints. Fastidius, Patrick, and Gildas are silent. Patrick knows nothing of the Roman commission which is assigned to him, he believed himself to be the subject of a Divine call. The reputed Roman consecrations of Palladius and Ninian by Celestine and Siricius respectively are without historic foundation.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, nearly all internal evidence is adverse to the *Roman* theory, whether evidence of liturgy, ritual, rule of life, art, architecture, as well as peculiar customs and practices. It must suffice to select a few points under each head:—

(1) LITURGY; under which heading will be noticed the Ordinal, the Mass, and the Psalter.

<sup>1</sup> In which case it would be a parallel to the Roman account of the mission of Germanus of Auxerre to Britain (A.D. 429). Prosper attributes the mission to Pope Celestine; Constantius, a presbyter of Lyons of the same fifth century, attributes it to a Gallican Synod, *cf.* MS. *De Vit. Germani*, i. 19. In this case Bede follows Constantius (*Eccl. Hist.* i. 17).

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* Warren, *Lit. and Rit. of the Celtic Ch.* 32.



(a) In respect of the *Ordinal*, we find it stated in the life of St. Kentigern that he was consecrated bishop by a single prelate *more Brittonum et Scottorum*. Especially curious this, since we have seen that the British bishops indorsed the Canons at Arles, which prescribed seven, or at least three, assistants ("assumptis secum septem aliis episcopis"). Again, the *Lectiōs* of the British Ordinal differed from both the Gallican and Roman, the three assimilating in only one proper lesson, 1 Tim. iii.

The anointing of the hands of priests and deacons at ordination seems to be a British peculiarity. Mr. Warren says: "There is a passage in a letter from Pope Nicholas I. to Rodolph, Archbishop of Bourges, asserting that the anointing of the hands was not then in use in the Roman Church in the ordination of either priests or deacons."<sup>1</sup> There are other ritual details of ordination, such as the prayer at the giving of the stole to deacons, the delivering to them the Book of the Gospels, the investing priests with a stole, etc., which, being foreign to any Western Ordinals of that period, and being found in early Anglo-Saxon Ordinals, must have been survivals of the British Church.

<sup>1</sup> *Liturgy and Rit.* 71 n. The words of Gildas, *Epist.* § 105, are "initiantur sacerdotum vel ministrorum manus." For the usage of hand-unction, cf. Martène, *De Antiq. Eccl. Rit.* ii. 22, 32, 36, 44, 46. The two lessons read in the British Church on the occasion were from 1 Pet. i. and ii. Cf. also Haddan and Stubbs, i. 140. Maskell, *Mon. Rit.* 3.



(b) In respect of the *Mass*.

Augustine's question to Pope Gregory, as recorded by Bede (*E. H.* 127), disposes of the general question of *independent use*. "Why," asks Augustine, "is one custom of Masses observed in the holy Roman Church and another in the Gallican Church?" And Gildas, in a passage partly already cited, speaks of British as utterly opposed to Roman use—"non solum in missa sed in tonsura etiam."<sup>1</sup>

Another point of difference was a multiplicity of *Collects* in the Mass. This was urged at the Council of Macon against the rule of St. Columbanus. The offence, according to the interpretation of Benedict XIV. long subsequently, was that the recital of a number of Collects infringed the custom of the Roman Church that there should be only one Collect in that part of the Mass. Again, Episcopal benediction after the breaking of the bread, introduced into the Anglo-Saxon Church as in Gaul long before the Roman mission, was probably a heritage from the British Church. At any rate, this is maintained by a responsible Romish writer.<sup>2</sup> Another difference between Britain and Rome, viz. the use of unleavened bread by the former, has been adduced by Dr. Döllinger.<sup>3</sup> But this is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wasserschleben, *Die Bussordnungen die abendl. Kirche*, 105 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Rock, *Ch. of our Fathers*, III. ii. 40. Cf. Maskell, *Anc. Lit.* 110. Muratori, *Lit. Rom. Vet.* ii. 517.

<sup>3</sup> *Geschichte der Christl. Kirche*, 217.

regarded as a mere conjecture, founded on the prevalence of that custom in the West, including England, at a later time.<sup>1</sup> And two other alleged points of difference, marriage of clergy and omission of benediction on marriage, must be regarded as unproven.

(c) As regards the *Psalter*.

We have the testimony of Gildas that the Roman Psalter was in use in the middle of the sixth century. It must however have supplanted the Gallican Psalter if the evidence of Sedulius, as given by Ussher (Opp. iv. 240), is reliable. Mr. Haddan<sup>2</sup> gives a list of readings of a Latin version of Scripture peculiar to British or Irish writers, which goes far to evidence a Celtic revision of the text of the *Vetus Latina*. The labours of the present Bishop Wordsworth and his collaborateur Mr. White should throw light upon this question.

(d) The *Lord's Prayer* also furnishes an illustration.

The Roman Liturgy has a fixed introduction and conclusion. In what is called the Ephesine family of liturgies, *e.g.* the Gallican, the introduction and embolismus (=the clause "deliver us from evil") vary with every service; a fact which of itself establishes a generic difference between the Roman liturgy and such forms as are preserved in *The Book of Deer*, *Stowe Missal*, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Martène, *De Ant. Eccl. Rit.* i. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, App. G.



(e) The *Sermon* constitutes another variety. After the Gospel, the Sermon was delivered in the Gallican and other Churches with the exception of the Church of Rome. In the latter, according to Sozomen (vii. 19), neither bishop nor presbyter was in the habit of preaching.

Lastly, the very ancient catalogue of the Irish Saints published by Abp. Ussher states that for some time after St. Patrick the Irish had only one Liturgy (presumably Roman), but that a second was introduced by the British Saints, Gildas, David, and Cadoc; the inference being that the British differed from the Roman liturgy. But the question is not really in dispute. Lingard observes that "the Italian Missionaries" (meaning Augustine and his band) "would of course establish the Roman liturgy in the new Church." And the evidence is established by a Canon of the Council of Cloveshoo under Cuthbert (A.D. 774), "The great solemnities of our redemption shall be everywhere celebrated according to the ritual which we have obtained from Rome."

To pass from the consideration of liturgy to that of

## (2) RITUAL.

And in order to differentiate the British and Roman Churches in this respect, we may consider the subjects of Baptism, Tonsure, Fasting, Observance of Days, Penance, Church Consecration, Church Dedication, Services of Song, and we may here add the Paschal Controversy.



(a) *Baptism.*

Some arbitrary enactment seems to have placed British Baptism under the ban of uncertain validity, and required conditional re-baptism. Professor Bright thinks that the question of trine or single immersion need not have been a serious difficulty to the disciples of a Pope (Gregory) who under trying circumstances advised the Spanish Church to retain the latter use. But the Canon respecting Baptism, alleged by Boniface to have existed in the English Church *since* Augustine, declaring the naming of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity necessary to valid baptism, tends to support the conjecture of Kunstmann that single immersion was the defect in Baptism attributed by Augustine to the British. However, in the Stowe Missal, which is the earliest Irish Baptismal Office, and in which Roman influence is prominent, *trine* immersion, with the alternative of aspersion, is ordered.

It is asserted by Lingard (*A. S. Ch.* i. 295) that the Britons did not confirm after baptism. He grounds this remarkable accusation upon Augustine's demand of the Britons—"ut ministerium baptizandi, quo Deo renascimur, juxta morem sanctæ Romanæ Apostolicæ Ecclesiæ compleatis."<sup>1</sup> He may have been influenced also by an assertion of St. Bernard that the Irish omitted confirmation.<sup>2</sup> However, the mention of confirmation in St.

<sup>1</sup> Bede, *H. E.* ii. 2.<sup>2</sup> *Vita Malachia*, 3.

Patrick's *Epist. ad Coroticum*, negatives Lingard's statement. Possibly there had been an occasional omission of the chrism, which might account for the charge. But in this matter, as in the case of Liturgy, whatever diversity of habit there may have been in the ceremonies preceding or following baptism, it gave place to conformity and uniformity after the Council of Cloveshoo, which enjoined universal adherence to the Roman ritual.

(b) *Tonsure.*

The British mode of tonsure differed both from the Eastern and Western use.<sup>1</sup> The Romans shaved the crown of the head in imitation of the crown of thorns. The Celts shaved all the hair in the front of a line drawn over the head from ear to ear.<sup>2</sup> In the early centuries there was no distinc-

<sup>1</sup> Roman writers minimize as much as possible the divergence between the Churches indicated by such points as Paschal Observance, the Tonsure, and mode of Baptism. M. Marin speaks of such as "certains usages secondaires," and bids us seek other reasons for such rebellion against the See of Rome than "une répugnance originelle pour la suprématie des Pontifes Romains." Cf. *Les causes de la dissidence*, p. 95, in *Académie des Inscriptions*, t. 5, 1<sup>re</sup> sér. Mr. Willis Bund has, however, made it clear that the real contest was not on such minor matters, but upon much greater issues, whether the Church is supreme over the State, whether the Clergy are supreme over the Church. The form of the contest was a struggle between tribal independence and foreign supremacy. See his *Celtic Ch. in Wales*, ch. i.

<sup>2</sup> Gildas has it thus—"cujus tonsura omnem capitis anteriorem partem ab aure ad aurem tantum contingebat." The tonsure, which was called indifferently the Eastern, the



tion of hair-wearing between the clergy and laity ; fear of persecution would have prevented this. It originated with the first professors of monasticism. The semi-circular seems to have been first adopted in Ireland, the circular in Gaul. The Roman party, who claimed St. Peter as the authority for their custom (Greg. Turon. *De Glor. Mart.* i. 28), attributed to Simon Magus that of their opponents ! The British tonsure was condemned by the fourth Council of Toledo, A.D. 633. Haddan mentions that the Colony of Saxons at Bayeux had before the year 590 copied the British tonsure from the Bretons.<sup>1</sup>

(c) *Fasting.*

The British rule of Fasting on Wednesday and Friday was conformable to Grecian rather than to Roman use.<sup>2</sup>

(d) *The Observation of Three Rogation Days.*

The original wording of the 16th Canon of the English Council of Cloveshoo deserves close attention.<sup>3</sup> There we find in juxtaposition two

Grecian, and the Tonsure of St. Paul, consisted in shaving the whole head.

<sup>1</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, *Counc.* i. 154. For the connection of the custom with Druidism, cf. the interesting work of Mr. Newell, *Anc. Brit. Ch.* The references to the use in Bede are *H. Ecc.* iii. 25, 26 ; iv. 1 ; v. 21. Cf. also Isidore, *de Div. Off.* ii. 4. Chamillard, *De Cor. Tonsura.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ussher, *Opp.* iv. 305. Adamnan, *Vit. S. Columb.* i. 126.

<sup>3</sup> Canon 16, De Diebus Lætationum. "Sexto decimo



institutions, the Letania Major and the three Rogation Days. The former was a Roman, the latter a Gallic institution which was not introduced into the Roman Church till the time of Leo III. The Council of Cloveshoo (749) ordains that the Letania be kept according to the rite of the Roman Church, the Rogation Days according to the use of *our ancestors*, implying that these holy days were a heritage from the British to the Anglo-Saxon Church, and suggesting the early connection between the British and Gallican Churches.

(e) *Choral Service.*

Whatever were the style of British sacred music, for centuries it differed from the Roman. Bede tells how that the Abbot John was sent by Pope Agatho with Biscop Benedict that he might teach in Biscop's Monastery of Bishop's Wearmouth "the mode of singing throughout the year as practised at St. Peter's in Rome."<sup>1</sup> A more decisive step in the direction of uniformity was taken at the Council of Cloveshoo, wherein it was enacted that the feasts of the saints should be kept on the days stated in the Roman martyrology with the

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condixerunt capitulo : Ut Lætaniæ, id est, rogationes, a clero omnique populo his diebus cum magna reverentia agantur, id est, die septimo kalendarum Maiarum, juxta ritum Romanæ ecclesiæ : quæ et Lætania major, apud eam vocatur. Et item quoque secundum morem priorum nostrorum, tres dies ante Ascensionem Domini in cælos cum jejuniis usque ad horam nonam et missarum celebratione venerantur."

<sup>1</sup> Bede, *E. H.* iv. 18.

chant and psalmody appointed thereto, and that nothing should be read or chanted unless by authority of Scripture and the custom of the Roman Church.

(f) *Penance.*

It is certain that confession was practised before the date of Abp. Theodore's regulations. We read of a penitent making *public* confession to Columba.<sup>1</sup> Bede (iv. 25) gives the story of Adamnan repairing to a priest to confess his guilt. Moreover, there is a *Liber de Penitentiis mensura* by Cumman, in which occurs the much-controverted expression, "confessio Deo soli agatur licebit si necesse est." What constitutes the necessity that renders confession to God alone sufficient? Widely differing are the replies forthcoming from controversialists like Soames and Lingard. Mr. Warren reminds us that Gildas used the expression, "pœnitentiæ medicamen"; and that the Irish title for a confessor was *anmcara* or soul's friend.<sup>2</sup>

(g) *Consecration of Churches.*

British customs with regard to the Consecration of Monasteries and Churches differed from those in use in Rome. Bede's description of the foundation of the Monastery of Lestinghae by Cedd, and the consecration of the church within the Monastery after the death of the founder, exem-

<sup>1</sup> "Coram omnibus qui ibidem inerant peccantias confitetur suas." Adamnan, *Vit. S. Columb.* i. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Bampt. Lect.* 287. *A. Sax. Ch.* i. 304. *Lit. and Rit.* 147.



plifies pre-Augustinian practice; for Cedd was brought up according to the institutions of the British Church. The difference of use between the two Churches led to the lengthy description by Bede of this particular consecration. Cedd founded the Monastery by residing on the spot and performing religious exercises thereat. On his death he was buried outside the Monastery; but in process of time (according to Bede), when a church was built of stone in the Monastery in honour of the Blessed Mother of God, his body was laid within at the right side of the altar. So then, British churches were not dedicated to a saint who had departed this life, as was the case subsequently, but the early Christians were at first the founders, and afterwards, in default of the usual mode of dedication, were regarded as the Saints of the churches which bear their names.<sup>1</sup>

(h) *Dedication of Churches.*

The Dedication of numerous churches to St. Martin of Tours (the two mentioned in the pre-

<sup>1</sup> Bede, *H. Eccl.* iii. 23. Skene, *Celt. Scotl.* ii. 13. Cusack, *Life of St. Petr.* 149. Rees, *Welsh Saints*, 57 ff. Thackeray, *Researches*, ii. 263. Haddan and Stubbs, i. 155. The latter writer observes that the churches dedicated to St. Martin at Canterbury and at Witherne were exceptions to the British practice Cf. Routledge's *Hist. of St. Martin's Ch., Canterbury*. Bp. Browne observes that Bede believed the Canterbury St. Martin's to have been dedicated during the Roman occupation, and adds, "If Martin himself ever lived at Canterbury, and had this church, the difficulty would disappear."—*The Church before Augustine*, 25.



vious note being certainly within the period of Roman occupation, and the only two known British Dedications of Roman date) points to Gallican sway over the British Church. Ailred tells that Ninian borrowed from St. Martin masons capable of building a stone church after the Roman fashion. On a promontory in Galloway he built the Cathedral of Witherne (Witherne). In the fifth century the Dedications to SS. Germanus and Bleiddian testify to the same Gallican influence.

### (3) RULE OF LIFE.

The introduction of monasticism into Britain must have nearly synchronized with the departure of the Romans. Like Christianity itself, we find it here but cannot discover who first brought it. That it came immediately from Gaul admits of little doubt; though whether it should be considered an importation from North or South Gaul is still an open question. The extreme popularity of St. Martin would point to Tours and Northern Gaul. Other considerations suggest the districts of Marseilles and Lerins, as is ably advocated by Professor Williams, though I cannot see with him that the *Vita Martini* contrasts St. Martin with the monks of Egypt, and therefore with those of Lerins who derived their inspiration therefrom. All that Sulpicius in the *Vita* means to say is, that of monks St. Martin is unique and incomparable. The Professor finds in the severity of early British discipline an assimilation to the use of

South Gaul rather than to that of St. Martin. But it is questionable if we have materials to decide this point. Guizot regarded the primitive character of the Gaulish as quite different from that of the Eastern Monasteries ; the former having a different origin, commencing from a need not of isolation but of reunion. This is too rough a generalization, for the fact is that all monasticism passes through a stage of isolated monachism before the Cœnobitic life takes shape. When, however, the monastic history of Britain dawns, the life is mainly social, and soon missionary ; Gallic in its origin, it has become subject to the influences of modification, development, and idiosyncrasy.<sup>1</sup>

(4) ART.

The style of artistic ornamentation is quite different to anything Roman. It could not be otherwise. The earliest *Christian* art that is known was confined in the early centuries almost exclusively to the paintings in the catacombs of Rome. Plenty of traces of Pagan Roman art are to be found in Britain upon pavements, bas-reliefs, and portable objects, on some few of which Christian symbols appear. All these are carefully tabulated in the excellent works of Haddan and Stubbs, and of Mr. Romilly Allen. But these Christian symbols need the exercise of the utmost

<sup>1</sup> Prof. H. Williams, *Christian Ch. in Wales*, 24. Guizot, *Civilis. en France*, i. 109. Ozanam, *La Civilis. Chrétienne*, 140.



discrimination. The sign of the Cross is no certain test. It was a pre-Christian as well as Christian symbol. The crown and the palm-branch were formerly interpreted as emblems of martyrdom, but they are both found on Pagan tombstones. The dove is Jewish in origin ; the peacock and the phoenix, though used by Christians as symbolical of the resurrection, are both Pagan in their origin. There is much to lead to the conclusion of Mr. Bright, that there are no definite traces in the early period, although there are fourth-century instances of the labarum. At any rate we may conclude with Schultze that the absence of favourite symbols found on old Christian tombs, as well as the form of the monuments, testify to a wide departure from the mother Church.<sup>1</sup> The earliest illuminated manuscripts have no affinities with Italian work ; unlooked-for evidence this that the ancient Church in these islands was independent of Rome. An anonymous writer speaks of the miniatures in the *Book of Kells* as constructed with the quaintness which marks the work of an isolated Church which owed Rome nothing. The earliest importation of Christian art worthy of the name was Byzantine, which when engrafted on native Pagan art became Celtic in character.

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte des Untergangs des Gr. Röm. Heident.* ii. 132. Cf. also McCaul, *Christian Epit. of the first six Centuries*. Scarth, *Rom. Brit.* Hübner, *Inscr. Brit. Chr.* Romilly Allen, *Monum. Hist. of the Brit. Ch.*, and his *Christian Symbolism*. Haddan and Stubbs, App. F.



## (5) ARCHITECTURE.

The materials employed for the early British churches were earth, wattles, and wood. Subsequently we find a derived group of structures, the plan of which was introduced from Rome. This could not be early. The copy must be later than the original; and it was not till after the Edict of Milan, A.D. 312, that basilicas were allowed to take the place of underground worship.<sup>1</sup> Time then must be allowed for the designs to reach Gaul and then introduce themselves into Britain. They were probably adopted here in the closing years of the fourth century. Admitting that we have in existence some few churches in which Roman materials have been used, the question will remain whether any now in use are of Roman construction; for materials re-used suggest a post-Roman date. The resuscitation of the ground plan of Silchester Church forbids a reply absolutely negative.<sup>2</sup>

[II.] The Eastern origin of the British Church has been maintained and repudiated with equal vehemence. On the one hand, Neander writes, "The peculiarity of the British Church is evidence against its origin from Rome. . . . In many ritual matters it agreed much more nearly with the Church of Asia Minor."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Mr.

<sup>1</sup> This is not the view entertained in *Early Christian Art*, S.P.C.K., p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> See the drawing of Mr. Haverfield, *Eng. Histor. Rev.*, July 1896.

<sup>3</sup> Urging that the approach of Christianity direct from

Haddan speaks of "the common but utterly groundless idea of a specially Greek (Oriental) origin of the British Church"; and again, "Oriental in no other sense than that its Christianity originated like all Christianity in Asia, and found its way to Britain through (most probably) Lyons."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Warren in his *Liturgy of the Celtic Church* has most carefully examined the evidence upon the subject, which may be thus briefly summarized. There is a similarity between the stone monuments of the North of Britain and those of the East; distinctive style of ornamentation, *e.g.* spiral zoomorphic, angulated and Z-like patterns, huge initial letters filled up with geometric designs of interlaced work and grotesque figures; especially serpentine ornamentation, and sometimes an admixture of gnostic symbolism. Liturgically, there are traces of oriental influence in the episcopal benediction immediately preceding the communion of the people; veiling of women at the Eucharist; unleavened bread; fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays. Historically, there are constant allusions to the East in the lives of the Saints; pilgrimages to Jerusalem were in vogue; legendary consecrations at Jerusalem, *e.g.* of SS. David, Teilo, Padarn, were recounted; Eastern authority is appealed to in controversies with Rome; Eastern authority was sought

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Asia Minor by means of commercial intercourse was quite possible and easy. *Ch. Hist.* i. 117. Prof. Westwood is equally pronounced in his *Palæographia Sacra*.

<sup>1</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, i. 19. *Remains*, 210.



for the Paschal Cycle; the history of the Celtic Church is elucidated by Coptic practices; lastly, there is the testimony of Irenæus as to the consent of the Celtic with the Eastern Churches. Facts such as these indicate a connection of some kind, mediate or immediate, between the Eastern and far Western Churches. The nature of this connection must be postponed for the moment. Meanwhile, a third hypothesis offers itself for consideration.

[III.] *The Pauline Origin of the British Church.*

The expression *Pauline* is advisedly adopted, for the claims of other Apostles cannot now be seriously advanced.<sup>1</sup> All that can be adduced in favour of the Pauline hypothesis was urged with all the force of special pleading by Bishop Burgess, at the beginning of the present century.<sup>2</sup> The period of a few years between the two imprisonments of the Apostle at Rome—respecting which the author of *Acts of the Apostles* is silent—has been suggested as the period of his personal visit to our own shores. But it is a surmise without evidence. The language of St. Clement that St. Paul reached the “boundary

<sup>1</sup> For the claims of St. Peter, see a pamphlet dated 1893 by Rev. W. Fleming. The idea prevailed from a misapprehension arising from the sending of Augustine to England by the successor of St. Peter. The story appears in the *Menologion. Græc.*, Mart. 16. Cf. Kemble, *Saxons in Engl.* ii. 355.

<sup>2</sup> *Origin and Independence of the Anc. Brit. Ch.* 23. Cf. also Dodwell, *Diss. de Rom. Pontif. Succ.* 114. R. W. Morgan, *St. Paul in Britain.*



of the West" is far too vague, and would certainly be satisfied by the accomplishment of his projected journey to Spain. An expression of Eusebius (*Dem. Ev.* iii. 5) has been pressed into the controversy. He speaks as if some of the Twelve, or of the Seventy disciples, had crossed over to the British Isles; but St. Paul was neither of the Twelve nor of the Seventy, and Eusebius himself contradicts the interpretation put upon his words (*H. E.* iii. 1), for in narrating the mission-fields of the Apostles, he omits all reference to Britain. The poet Venantius (A.D. 580) is only evidence that the writings (*stylus*) of the Apostle, not his person, reached Britain.<sup>1</sup> The English Jesuit, Robert Parsons (*temp.* Elizab.), in his work entitled *The Three Conversions*, speaks of Nicephorus, Theodoret, and Sophronius as writers who testify that "the British Islands fell in division among the Apostles in the first partition which they made of the world;" but the language of Nicephorus, *Hist.* i. 1 (a ninth-century writer), that "another Apostle went to the extreme countries of the ocean and to the British Isles," is merely a cento of the expressions of Clement and Eusebius, already discussed. Theodoret certainly includes the Britons in his list of nations (Scythians, Indians, Ethiopians, Persians, Hyrcanians, Cimbrians, Germans, etc.) subjected to Christ through the influence of "our fishermen and publicans and tent-maker," yet he seems after-

<sup>1</sup> *Vit. S. Mart.* iii. 491, p. 321.

wards to qualify this hyperbole by asserting that it was after the death of the Apostles that the laws of the Gospel were established among the "Persians, Scythians, and the other barbarous nations."<sup>1</sup> Sophronius is quoted by the Magdeburgh Centuriators as bringing St. Paul to Britain, but his fragments contain no such reference, and if they did, the authority (says Haddan) would be worthless. If this be so, the Welsh Triads are the earliest authority for special respect felt towards St. Paul in Britain.<sup>2</sup>

[IV.] *The Gallican Theory.*

Much that has already been said will have afforded a presumption that for early evangelistic effort in this country of any real importance, we must look to missionaries from Gaul. Of course in the first century of Roman occupation Christianity may have followed commerce in individual instances, or its seeds have been sown by an occasional Roman soldier, a recruit from a distance; but for the elements of anything like a nascent Church or even congregation we must look to the

<sup>1</sup> *Græc. Affect. Curat.* ix. Cf. in Ps. cxvi. 2, et in 2 Tim. iv. 17.

<sup>2</sup> There is nothing in all this to contradict the belief of Gildas that the precepts of Christ were taught here in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar. It would indeed be hazardous to assert the impossibility of *individuals* having been taught Christianity. Ussher, however, seems to discount the words of Gildas, referring to the Chronicle of Eusebius for its origin, which the former may have misunderstood. Cf. Gildas, *De excid. Brit.* 8. Ussher, *Primord.* 3.



missionary effort of the Gallican Church, which owed its own existence to Asia Minor. Pothinus, first Bishop of Lyons, came from that quarter, bringing with him Irenæus who succeeded him in his See. Any oriental features therefore in the British Church are readily accounted for by this Gallican intermediary.<sup>1</sup>

In favour of this Gallican theory there is an accumulation of varied evidence. First, Gaul was geographically the nearest Church to Britain. The country of the Celts of which Irenæus speaks is the Gallia Celtica of Cæsar, the district about Lyons and Vienne, the site of the labours and episcopate of Irenæus himself.

The facility of transit points in the same direction. In all records of ancient missions, the efforts of pioneers are traceable along the line of communication. In the forum of Lyons not only had the great roads from Italy their termination, but from it issued four great lines of road to the

<sup>1</sup> There is much oriental colouring in the Liturgies not only of Britain but also of Gaul, Spain, and Ireland. And this colouring is not adequately accounted for by reference to the Lyons Mission alone. Duchesne calls attention to the relations between the Churches of the West and Milan about the close of the fourth century, when this city had attained to vast dignity, both political and ecclesiastical. It may well be then that rites bearing a Byzantine impress in the Western Church owed this characteristic to the influence radiating from Milan. It is probable, too, that some oriental colouring may be due to Cassian's connection with Marseilles.

various quarters of Gaul.<sup>1</sup> The road was nearly direct from Lugdunum (Lyons) to Gessoriacum (Boulogne), which would serve as the *Portus Britannicus* or principal means of communication with Britain.

Again, the ecclesiastical organizations of the two Churches were similar. We have traces of the presence or influence of several Gallican bishops in England, such as Martin, Hilary, Victricius; and later, of Germanus, Lupus, Severus, etc. We have already noted the dedication of churches to Gallican Saints.<sup>2</sup> The Paschal Cycle was employed as drawn up by a disciple of St. Martin; Gallican usage was adopted in such features as lections, proper prefaces, position of the benediction, *deprecatio* for the departed, the *hymnus trium puerorum*, the observance of Rogation Days; whilst the use of the Gallican Psalter is asserted by Ussher on the authority of Sedulius.<sup>3</sup>

Abundant proofs too are forthcoming of the intercourse which existed between Britain and Gaul. In the fourth and following centuries we

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Travers Smith, *Ch. in Roman Gaul*, 33.

<sup>2</sup> Not only the dedication of the church in Galloway by Ninian to St. Martin, but the whole account of Ninian's Northern mission evidences the close connection between Britain and Gaul.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Professor Collins, *The Beginnings of English Christianity*, 31; Mr. F. E. Warren, *Liturg. and Rit. of the Celtic Church*, 58 ff. (both excellent works). Lingard, *Anglo-Saxon Ch. i.* 342. Haddan, *Remains*, 216.



find British Christians emigrating into Brittany, and some occupying Gallican Sees, as (probably) Mello of Rouen, and Faustus of Riez. In the Arian controversy the two Churches take the same stand.

Nor is an adequate occasion lacking for Gaul to make of Britain a daughter Church. For very soon after the formation of the infant Church in Gaul (A.D. 175) arose the persecution under Marcus Aurelius, of which the details are so well known through the letters written by the survivors. The Churches are said to have been nearly obliterated. But, as was the constant characteristic of the martyr Church throughout her history, its blood became seed, if not where it was shed, yet elsewhere. "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word." We hear of three Christians reaching the town of Autun taking refuge in the house of Faustus, a wealthy decurion, who received the truth and was baptized with his wife and son. They proceeded on their mission and founded the Churches of Dijon, Saulieu, Langres; the latter being on one of the routes to Britain. Beyond this there is little trace of the refugees of the dispersion. They are not found in the North of Gaul. But this is natural. Britain was further from the scene of persecution, and was safer, and the Celtic race they would find was akin to that they had left behind them. There would be no difficulty of language; the native speech of Britain and that of Gaul were closely akin.

But even more direct evidence is adducible from the circumstance that Irenæus writing in the middle of the closing quarter of the second century<sup>1</sup> knows nothing of Christianity in Britain, or at any rate is silent about it in his enumeration of Christian nations; whereas Tertullian within a generation from that date could speak of "Britanorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo vero subdita."<sup>2</sup> But we seem to be warned not to make too much of this last statement, for Origen (about A.D. 230) speaks of very many in Britain who had not yet heard the word of the Gospel. Still, it meant something, and we get a period, namely the last quarter of the second century, within which the British Church may well have been planted.

Thus we have, it would seem, all that is necessary to establish the Gallican hypothesis. We have a *fons* in the Gallican Church; we have a great Roman road for its course; we have a period answering to the historical expectations aroused by the silence of Irenæus and the voice of Tertullian;<sup>3</sup> we have an adequate occasion in the dispersion after the Aurelian persecution; there is

<sup>1</sup> Harnack in his *Altchristl. Litter.* II. gives the date between A.D. 181 and 189.

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. Jud.* vii.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Haverfield, however, thinks that the "rhetorical colouring" of the latter writer forbids precise conclusions. *Engl. Histor. Review*, 417. Still Irenæus was so situated on the line of communication between Gaul and Britain that he must have known if Christianity had a real footing here.



the propinquity of the two peoples ; the identity of their governments, the kinship of the inhabitants, and, as before observed, a strong tradition that Christianity was introduced at this period, though attributed, through motives easy to be understood, to another source. We have found an assimilation of organization, of ritual and worship ; evident and abundant tokens of intercourse. Moreover, on *à priori* grounds, it is most improbable that Christianity entered Britain to any extent before it entered Gaul ;<sup>1</sup> and in this case we could not look to an earlier date than the latter half of the second century. And the facts would seem to fasten the date to the close of the second century, when congregations would be gradually formed and in course of time bishoprics established presumably by the aid of the Gallican episcopate.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding Cardinal Pole's affirmation in Parliament that Britain was the first of all countries to receive the Christian faith. He would doubtless be influenced by the priority of antiquity conceded, in spite of remonstrance, at the Council of Pisa, A.D. 1417, again confirmed at the Council of Constance, A.D. 1419, and subsequently at the Council of Sienna, A.D. 1423, upon the grounds that the Church of Britain was founded by Joseph of Arimathæa *statim post passionem Christi* ; to which reference will be made immediately. It may be added that Gildas, without giving any authority save "ut scimus," says, "Christus suos radios, id est sua præcepta, indulget, tempore summo Tiberii Cæsaris." Lingard urges that these words might be applicable to any year before the fourth century.

<sup>2</sup> Since writing the above, I find that Prof. Bright has reached the same conclusions. He says, "There can be no

Thus did history repeat itself. The Brythonic religion, as found here by Cæsar at the time of his invasion, was that of the Gaulish Celts. It was appropriate that the pure religion, Christianity, which supplanted it, should hail from the same quarter.<sup>1</sup>

But this sketch would be incomplete without some notice of a persistent tradition which associates the early British Church with the name of Joseph of Arimathea and the locality of Glastonbury. If the tradition were sufficiently established to pass for history, it would not interfere with the results that

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doubt that the British Church was founded in the second century ; and it seems highly probable that it was an offshoot of the Church of Gaul ; if we please, we may suppose that as in the days which followed the persecution that arose about Stephen, some Christians from Lyons or its neighbourhood withdrew to the North of Gaul, and thence made their way across the Channel and deposited the germs which grew into the British Church." Bright, *Roman See in the Early Church*, 359.

<sup>1</sup> Hence the language of Mr. Haddan is out of all proportion to the available evidence. He says, "Up to the time of the departure of the Romans, such Christianity as existed among us, weak at best and scantily spread, appears to have been confined mainly, if not exclusively, to Roman settlements and Romanized natives." *Remains*, 216. Such a view contradicts the statements of both Tertullian and Origen, who lived near enough in time to the Aurelian *dispersion* to know what they were talking about. The former says that places in Britain unapproached by Romans were subjected to Christ ; the latter speaks of "converted Britons." Cf. Tert. *Adv. Jud.* 7. Origen, *Hom.* 6, in *Luc.*



have been submitted. An early Christian establishment in Britain is a different thing to an early British Church. Sentiment would alone be sufficient to induce the collecting of every scrap of available evidence to establish the birth-place of British Christianity. Glastonbury had been renowned for sanctity many generations before the Conquest.

In the Cotton MSS. in the British Museum (*Cl. B. 13, f. 61*) is an extract from a life of Dunstan, written by a contemporary,<sup>1</sup> the purport of which is—that in the West of Britain is a *royal* island called Gleston, large and compassed about with waters full of fish, with other conveniences of life, but, which is more important, it was devoted to the service of God. Here the first disciples of the Catholic law found an ancient Church, not built, as was reported, by men's hand, but prepared by God Himself for the benefit of men. By the twelfth century this extract had been improved upon; and William of Malmesbury could relate that of the dispersed, after the martyrdom of Stephen, St. Philip reached the Frankish territory and converted many; that being desirous to enlarge his Master's dominion, he picked out twelve of his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ussher, *Britann. Eccles. Antiq.* c. i. 7. The traditions are also analyzed by Stillingfleet, *Orig. Britann.* c. i. 6–13. Ussher cites also *Melchini fragmentum* (5th c.) to the effect that Joseph, the noble decurion, received his eternal rest with his eleven comrades in the Isle of Avalon. Cf. also Strype's *Archbp. Parker*, i. 139, and Godwin, *De Præsul. Angl. Intr.* c. 2.

disciples and sent them to preach the Gospel in Britain, Joseph of Arimathea being one of the number. These holy missionaries, coming into Britain A.D. 63, taught Christ courageously; Joseph, at the command of the Archangel, building a chapel in honour of the Virgin. The barbarous King refused to become a proselyte, but gave them a little plot of ground surrounded with fens and bushes to dwell in. This place was called Inys-vitryn or Avalon ("the glassy isle" or "the isle of apples"), the "Glastonbury" of to-day, where St. Michael's Tor looks down on the ruins of the abbey which succeeded to the *vetusta ecclesia virgea*, the ancient church of wattle. Geoffrey of Monmouth, a twelfth-century writer like William of Malmesbury, has been adduced as an authority for ascribing to Gildas the Joseph legend. But it is not to be found in any known work of the true Gildas; and the silence of all such ancient writers as Gildas, Bede, Asser, and Marianus is more than suspicious. Moreover, there are various versions of the story. Baronius, quoting from "The acts of Mary Magdalene,"<sup>1</sup> tells that Lazarus,<sup>2</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> *Eccles. Annals; ad annum 35!*

<sup>2</sup> A recent writer argues from the expression "the triads of Lazarus" in an old British Triad, that it can only be accounted for by his presence and teaching in Britain. Cf. Dr. Gray, *Origin of Christianity in Britain*, 12. I regret that I cannot follow him here, nor in a subsequent proposition, that "Druidism dissolved by the natural action of its own principles into Christianity."



Magdalene, Martha, and an attendant Marcella, were expelled from Jerusalem and turned adrift into an oarless vessel, which by Divine providence brought them to Marseilles ; and to these he adds (from a MS. history of the Angles in the Vatican) the name of Joseph who sailed from Gaul into Britain, where he taught and where he ended his days.

Still, Bishop Browne would plead that a part of the story finds a recent illustration. In the low ground occupying the marshes which gave the name of Avalon to the higher ground, a local antiquary in 1842 began to excavate some dome-shaped hillocks, whose treasures had been preserved by the antiseptic qualities of peat formed in the long ages. The hillocks proved to be the remains of British houses burned with fire, which were set on ground made solid in the water with causeways connecting with the land, where was to be seen abundance of strong wattle-work, which, when uncovered, was found as good as when it was made. Though the fire has destroyed the huts, it reveals the material, for it has baked the clay covering of the huts which bears the impress of the wattle. In confirmation of this interesting discovery, Bishop Browne notes, that in the MS. register of Lavercost Priory, there is mention made of a *Capella de Virgis*, a chapel of wattle-work, at Trevernan.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Browne, *The Christian Ch. before the coming of Augustine*, 46. See also Warner, *Hist. of Glastonbury*; Dean Alford's

It is apart from the object of this sketch to discuss the historical value of the traditions connected with such names as Caractacus, Aristobulus, Pudens, Lucius, Claudia, etc. All that can be adduced may be found in the pages of Ussher, Burgess, Stillingfleet, Fuller, Yeowell, Thackeray, and Gray. More suitable to the present object is an enquiry into the alleged interposition of Pope Eleutherus, at the instance of "King Lucius." It has already been observed that there is a noticeable coincidence in time between the date of this supposed application to the Pope and the dispersion after the Aurelian persecution;<sup>1</sup> the latter event occurring during the Roman episcopate of Eleutherus. This dispersion, it is here submitted, was overruled to form the germ of a Gallican Mission on a small scale in Britain; it formed in some sort the nucleus

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Poems: *Ballads of Glastonbury*, i. 16; and *Proceedings of Somerset Archæol. Soc.*; and especially the notes of Mr. Freeman and Professor Willis. Of the *antiquity* of the church of Avalon there is no question. "The first Church in the Kingdom built by the disciples of Christ," says the Charter of Edgar.

<sup>1</sup> Though it must be confessed there is a margin of uncertainty about the period assigned. Ussher (*Br. Eccl. Ant.* 21) enumerates twenty-five dates between A.D. 137 and 199. Bishop Browne, following Haddan and Stubbs, i. 25, observes that Bede gives two different dates, A.D. 156 (in i. 4) and A.D. 167 (in the chronological summary at the end of Book v.); but this arises from his not perceiving that the first epitome was certainly written by another hand. Lingard suggests the mistake of a copyist in Bede's date for the accession of Aurelius.



of a Christian Church. "King Lucius" may have been (as Lingard suggests) a tributary chieftain within the province, or an independent prince beyond the vallum; but the point is this:—Granted that there was at this moment a Christianizing agency at work in Britain, and supposing that it were thought desirable at Rome to assign the good work to an Italian rather than to a Gallican Mission, what better story could have been contrived than that some British ruler had made application by letter to the then Bishop of Rome, to send emissaries for the conversion of pagan Briton? But further, if upon investigation it be found that the said letter is a late forgery, not only in its subsequent embellishments but in its incipient form, then the whole house of cards crumbles.<sup>1</sup>

As the story was first introduced into Britain by Bede, it will be best to give his version of the same. "A.D. 156, Marcus Antoninus Verus, the fourteenth from Augustus, ascended the throne with Aurelius Commodus his brother. During

<sup>1</sup> So that Lingard's words, "the story seems, however, to receive corroboration from the fact that after the time assigned to the conversion of Lucius, continental writers begin to number this island among the conquests of Christianity," ought to run—"the conversion of Lucius was alleged after that continental writers numbered this island among the conquests of Christianity." However, Lingard admits "the story is suspicious." The late Professor Burton, in rejecting the Lucius story, seems to have nearly approached the view here advocated. He says:—"Perhaps there was some circumstance about this time which was favourable to the spreading of the Gospel in Britain." *Lect. on Eccl. H.* ii. 20.

their reign, whilst Eleuther a holy man, was presiding over the Roman Church, Lucius, a British king, sent him a letter, beseeching that by his commission he might be made a Christian. Presently he obtained the fulfilment of his pious request. After which the Britons kept the faith which they had thus received without molestation, uncorrupted and untainted, until the time of the Emperor Diocletian."

Bede's source of information was the Roman account as given in the *later form* of the *Catalogus Pontificum Romanorum*,<sup>1</sup> a biographical list of the Popes written about A.D. 530. This list grew by accretions. The oldest manuscript of it dates about the end of the seventh century.<sup>2</sup> In the earliest form of the *Pontificalis*, coming down to A.D. 353, there is not a word on the subject of Lucius' letter to the Pope. It is one of the many Roman manufactures for the purpose of establishing claim to ecclesiastical authority.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Schelstrate, *Diss. de Antiq. Pont. Catal.*, prefixed to Anastasius in Muratori : iii. 1, c. Haddan and Stubbs, i. 25.

<sup>2</sup> The *Lib. Pontific.* has been edited by Duchesne. The clause not found in the older form of the *Liber* is—"Hic (Eleuther) accepit epistula a Lucio Britannio rege ut Christianus efficeretur per ejus mandatum." Cf. Anastasius, *De Vit. Pontif. Romanae*, i. 15, iv. 2. Ussher carefully collects the authorities who transmitted the *insertion*. *Br. Eccl. Antiq.* 25. Duchesne and Haddan ascribe the addition to the time of Prosper. *Remains*, 227. Duchesne, *Lib. Pontif.* i. 136. A later date, with much more reason, is proposed by Mr. Haverfield and Prof. Williams.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Collins notes that Mommsen shows by a comparison



From the same *Pontificalis* the story was copied inaccurately into the *Historia Brittonum* ascribed to Nennius,<sup>1</sup> who amplifies the legend, telling that Lucius was also called Lleufer Mawr (the great luminary).<sup>2</sup> He is said to have sent a letter to the Pope by Eluanus and Meduinus, the supposed reply to which has been rejected as a forgery by Spelman, Ussher, Duchesne, Mommsen, Milman, Lingard, Haverfield, Haddan, and Stubbs. It occurs (says Haddan) among other plainly fabulous legends relating to Wales in certain spurious additions to the laws of Edward the Confessor, in the *Liber Custumarum* belonging to the Guildhall, a compilation of the reign of Edward II. Indeed the forgery is beyond all question; suffice it to say, that purporting to be a papal letter of the close of the second century, its biblical quotations are from Jerome's version of the Bible about two centuries subse-

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of the three texts in the *Liber Pontificalis*, Bede, and Nennius, that the fable came from Rome to Britain. *Beg. of Engl. Chr.* 26.

<sup>1</sup> Inasmuch as the Bede version is more accurate than that of Nennius, Zimmer is probably right in regarding the testimony of the latter as independent. *Nennius Vindicatus*, v. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Rees (*Welsh Saints*, 262) says that the Welsh term "Lles . . . first occurs in the fabulous chronicles . . . due to those later authors who formed a Welsh imitation of Lucius." Prof. Williams remarks that "the very name Lles (Lles ab Coel), as the Welsh equivalent for Lucius, stamps the Welsh story as later. Had it been old . . . the name would have taken some such form as Luc, Lig, or Lug (*cf.* Tegid = Tacitus)." *Ch. in W.* 10.

quently.<sup>1</sup> The embellishments of the whole story are as varied as they are numerous. The supply of information was always equal to the demand in the Middle Ages, when surfeit of legend meant famine of history. The Silurian Catalogues relate that four persons, named Dyfan, Fagan, Medway, and Elfan, were sent to Lucius by Eleutherus. This would have been passed over but for the fact that there are local indications near Llandaff in the form of churches which would seem to defy a spirit of scepticism. Indeed Lingard says, "their existence seems to confirm the old tradition that Lucius reigned in that part of the country." Rather should we infer, having regard to all the circumstances, that such persons as Fagan were historic, and that their names were in later times pressed into the service of the Lucius story.

An invention such as this will not disturb our conclusions as to British Christianity in the second century. We have seen the ship launched ; but such are the mists that we can scarcely discern her on her early course. In the case of the converts, polytheism had given place to Christianity. The natural condition of the Britons has been described by writers as independent of each other as Origen, Porphyry, and Gildas ; the latter telling of their idols that they were as monstrous, extravagant, and numerous as those of Egypt.

<sup>1</sup> The letter is too long to retail. It is given by Spelman, Sammes, Ussher, Stillingfleet, Collier, Migne, J. Williams, Haddan, etc,



Though Christianity was still for a century or more a proscribed religion, at this fringe of the empire persecution seems to have been hardly known. Not that the conquering people would look with any favour upon the new religion ; they would rather view it with contempt in a compatriot, with indifference in a native.<sup>1</sup> Certainly there are no visible tokens that Christianity made much headway with the Roman population, which was mainly military. The extant monuments relate to military life ; its tombs and inscriptions are military, and there is a marked absence of everything of Christian savour. One cannot help feeling that Christianity was less holden of the soldiery here than on the Continent. The legend of the Hallelujah battle represents the bulk of the British army as unbaptized till the eve of the conflict. As against an almost nil return in Britain, we might set off an ascertained statistic regarding its neighbour Gaul. M. Le Blant has instituted a comparison of the number of soldiers found in Christian and Pagan epitaphs, and gathers from an examination of several thousands, that about  $\cdot 5$  per cent. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) were found in the former, and  $5\frac{1}{4}$  in the latter.<sup>2</sup> The name has already been mentioned of one officer in Britain, Maximus, who was baptized ; but this

<sup>1</sup> Natives would many of them be employed in service ; but the greater number by far would live entirely apart from their conquerors, retaining their native system of law.

<sup>2</sup> E. le Blant, *Inscrip. Chrét. de la Gaule antér. au viii<sup>me</sup> siècle*.

took place during the last of his fifteen years of military command, and his motive is assignable.

Not that the Continent could make any great boast in this direction. The imperial army contained few Christians. Diocletian and Licinius could exclude them from service without sensibly diminishing the army roll. Julian could write with satisfaction that the mass of his army worshipped the gods. Even in Valentinian's reign the frontier forces were largely heathen.<sup>1</sup> Still, at the beginning of the fourth century they were of sufficient importance to be the occasion of the third Canon of the Council of Arles :—"Those that refuse to continue in their employment as soldiers, now the persecution was over, were to be suspended communion."<sup>2</sup> To this testimony may be added the legends of soldier-martyrs, which would have some historical basis.

We learn from Bede that the Britons preserved the faith uncorrupted and entire, in peace and tranquillity, till the time of the Emperor Diocletian.<sup>3</sup> To the same effect had Gildas written before him, that the rays of Christian light, though received with lukewarmness (*tépide*) by the inhabitants generally, beamed forth in full effulgence in the lives of some, until the nine years' persecution of Diocletian.<sup>4</sup> In the dearth of information as to the

<sup>1</sup> Haverfield, *E. Brit. Chr.*, citing Domaszewski, *Rel. d. römisch-Heeres*. 63-67.

<sup>2</sup> For the interpretations of this disputed Canon, see Stillingfleet, *Orig. Brit.* 87. Hefele, *Counc.* (Clark), i. 185 f.

<sup>3</sup> Bede, i. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Histor. Gildæ*, § 9.



British Church in the third century, we are almost bound to accept this testimony ; especially as it coincides with the scattered notices of Origen, who wrote in the middle of the third century that "the power of our Lord and Saviour is with those who in Britain are divided from our world," etc. ; and on the other hand (though not inconsistently), "very many of the Britons have not yet heard the word of the Gospel."<sup>1</sup>

That the number of British martyrs in this Diocletian persecution (beginning A.D. 303) is exaggerated in Bede's martyrology seems certain. Such a number as 888 would stultify the eulogy which Eusebius pronounces upon the local ruler Constantius when speaking of his attitude towards Christianity, eulogy for which he had the authority of Lactantius, a contemporary of the persecution, who says that "Constantius, lest he should have seemed to dissent from the injunctions of his superiors, permitted the demolition of churches . . . but preserved entire that true temple of God, which is the human body."<sup>2</sup>

The names of three of the martyrs are on record. Gildas mentions Alban of Verulam, Julius and Aaron of the City of Legions, and we may without

<sup>1</sup> *Ez. Hom.* 4. *Matt. Comm.* § 39.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. *H. Ecc.* viii. 13. Lactantius, *Mort. Persec.* § 15. At that time the Welsh Church ministers were taken from the highest class of society. Had the violence of the persecution extended to these, as it naturally would in obedience to imperial edict, their names would have been recorded by the herald Bards.

hesitation accept the judgment of Milman, that there seems no reason to doubt the historic reality of the British proto-martyr. Sceptical historians pullulate as do theologians ; but usually their premises are false. The outline of the legend of St. Alban, says Mr. Wright,<sup>1</sup> was probably an invention of the sixth century, at the latter end of which his name is mentioned by the poet Venantius ; ignorant evidently that in the year 429 St. Germanus is reported to have visited his tomb and to have afterwards dedicated to his memory a church in Auxerre. We need not surrender to myth this time-honoured name. St. Alban is the earliest example of a name attached to a Christian site in Britain ; the name of a

“ Self-offered victim, for his friend he died,  
And for the faith ! ” <sup>2</sup>

Of Aaron and Julius, whose names are usually coupled, little is known. One of them has a Hebrew name, as was common in later times. Their names were honoured in Caerleon in the ninth century as appears from the *Liber Landavensis* ; and still in 1200 when Giraldus wrote. It is said that each had a titular church in Caerleon, that of Julius belonging to a convent of sacred virgins, that of Aaron being served by a college of canons. Bishop Godwin, writing at the beginning of the seventeenth

<sup>1</sup> *Celt, Rom. and Sax.* 302.

<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth, *Eccl. Sonn.* 6. Matthew Paris speaks of the discovery of a book amid the ruins of Verulam in the tenth century, which contained the history of St. Alban written in the ancient British character and dialect.



century, notes that traces of them were then extant. The day of their martyrdom is kept on July 1st.<sup>1</sup>

The abdication of Diocletian and Maximin in favour of Constantius and Galerius put a stop at once to whatever severities were practised upon the Christians; and they were henceforth permitted the free exercise of their religion. In his previous subordinate position Constantius may be held irresponsible for the ills due to the edict of his superior.<sup>2</sup> And now still better times were dawning; the toleration of Constantius gave place to the direct protection vouchsafed by his son and successor Constantine. No sooner had the Diocletian persecution ceased than the British Christians rebuilt their churches which had been destroyed, as is testified by Gildas and Bede. In the language of the latter—"the faithful Christians, having during the time of danger hidden themselves in woods and deserts and secret caves, appeared again in public and rebuilt the churches which had been levelled with the ground, founded, erected, and completed the temples of the holy martyrs, and, as it were, displayed their conquering ensigns in all places, celebrated festivals, and performed their sacred rites with clean hearts."

In the earlier pages an attempt was made to give a faint sketch of the fortunes of the British Church in the fourth century, based upon its repre-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gildas, 8. Bede, i. 7. Giraldus, *Itin. Cambr.* i. 5 *Myer.* *Archæ.* ii. 319. Tanner, *Bib. Brit.* i. *Sanctor.* *Cathol.* i.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. *E. H.* viii. 13.

sentation at foreign synods, and upon incidental notices of its welfare in the pages of Arnobius, Lactantius, Eusebius, Hilary, Athanasius, Jerome, etc. Had space permitted it would have been interesting to trace the rise of the Arian and Pelagian heresies in this country, though the latter scarcely falls within the limits of our period. We have the authority of Gildas and Bede that Arianism did find its way here and was the cause of much confusion. Ussher dates its introduction at about 380, when Gratian issued an edict that all sects except the Manichæans, Photinians, and Eunomians should have free exercise of faith and worship throughout his empire. It seems however soon to have declined; many probably transferred their allegiance to the more plausible theory of Pelagius.

Our last duty is to enquire how far archæology supports history as to the existence of a Christian Church in Britain before the departure of the Romans in A.D. 410. The question is not whether we can point to buildings of undoubted Roman origin, but whether these were used as Christian places of worship; and this is difficult to determine, as the plans of the first churches were copied from those of the basilicas or halls of justice at Rome. It is therefore necessary to look for other indications, such as orientation, Christian symbolism, inscriptions, Christian formulæ, etc. Of churches in which Roman material has been utilized there are abundant examples; but this rather implies a post-Roman date for the existing



edifices, though it suggests that earlier churches may have been built on the same site.

First then, as to the *material fabric* of churches, what is there archæologically to substantiate the testimony of St. Chrysostom (c. 390) that "even the British Isles have felt the power of the word, for there too Churches and Altars have been erected."<sup>1</sup> Setting aside Bede's assertion that Canterbury Cathedral was "built by the ancient work of Roman believers," we may accept his verdict regarding St. Martin's Church in that city by reason of its confirmation from archæological evidence.<sup>2</sup> Some years ago, parts of an old wall of this church were brought to light, built of stone and rubble, with regular bonding courses of Roman brick; moreover, the wall was faced with Roman plastering made of pounded brick.<sup>3</sup> More definite still are the remains of a Romano-British church at Silchester. In 1892, excavation brought into evidence a small building, which by its ground-plan declared itself to be a fourth-century British church. The nave is floored with coarse red-tiled tesserae, in the apse is a panel of finer mosaic. These are probably the only existing remains and sites of

<sup>1</sup> A rather later testimony is that of Constantius, who, telling of the arrival of the Gallic bishops to dispel Pelagianism, says "they preached in churches," etc. (*Vit. Germ.* i. 23.)

<sup>2</sup> "Dum Romani incolerent Britanum." Bede, *H. Ecc.* i. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Haddan and Stubbs, i. 37. Haverfield in *E. H. Rev.* 424. *Journ. of Brit. Archæol. Assoc.* xi. 427. Allen, *Mon. Hist.* 24. Canon Routledge, *St. Martin's Ch.*

churches which can at present be certainly ascribed to the period of Roman occupation.

Eagerly does one look out for traces of christian symbolism in these early centuries, such as the Cross, the sacred Monogram, the Aureole, the palm-branch, the ΑΩ. But the harvest is small.

The cross, except that which is called the monogrammatic cross, does not appear in any inscription of the first four centuries. It has been found on early cups, vases, spoons, ornaments, etc.; but the date of such relics is undetermined. The cross used to be adduced by antiquarians as a proof of post-Christian date; but it has been found as an emblem here and elsewhere in lacustrine dwellings and cemeteries many ages before Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Far more reliable as evidence of the presence of Christianity in Britain in the fourth century is the sacred Monogram or Chi-Rho or Labarum, of which the finds up to date are annexed. It will be known that the emblem is a combination of the two initial Greek letters of the Greek name of Christ, X and P, placed in such a manner that the vertical stroke of the P cuts the point of intersection of the two cross strokes of the X. Wherever the emblem appears in the period of this paper, the date of it must be between 312 and 410 A.D.

(1) There is the one found in the Roman villa at Frampton, near Dorchester.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> De Montillet, *La signe de la Croix avant le Christianisme*.

<sup>1</sup> Figured in Lyson's *Reliquiæ Britann. Rom.*, No. 3, in Allen's *Rhind Lectures* for 1883, and in Hübner's *Inscrip. Brit. Christianæ*, No. 31. Because it is associated with a



(2) One that is cut on four building stones in a Roman villa at Chedworth, near Cirencester. Here the lower part of the vertical stroke of the P is cut by the diagonal strokes of the X.<sup>1</sup>

(3) The Monogram found at Corbridge, near Hadrian's Northumberland wall. It is repeated six times on a silver bowl.<sup>2</sup>

(4) A cross at Harpole in Northamptonshire, having in the centre a circle divided into eight parts by radial lines,<sup>3</sup> so as to resemble one form of the Monogram.

(5) A leaden seal found in the Silchester forum.<sup>4</sup>

(6) Eight blocks of pewter found in the Thames, near Battersea, preserved in the British Museum, stamped with the name Syagrius, the Chi-Rho, and either the words *spes in Deo* or the letters A Ω.<sup>5</sup>

(7) A terra-cotta lamp in the Newcastle Museum, with the Monogram.<sup>6</sup>

head of Neptune immediately adjoining, some hesitate to allow this as Christian, but without sufficient reason. Cf. Wright, *Celt, Rom. and Sax.* 302.

<sup>1</sup> Figured in Allen, p. 74. Cf. *Archæol. Journ.* for 1864, and *Journ. Brit. Arch. Assoc.* xxiii. 228, xxiv. 132. Cf. Lysons, *Our Brit. Ancest.* 76.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hodgson, *Hist. of Northumb.* iii. 246. Haddan and Stubbs, i. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Allen, *Rh. Lect.* 96. *Mon. Hist.* 29. *Journ. Archæol. Assoc.* for 1850, p. 126. <sup>4</sup> *Archæologia*, xlvi. 363.

<sup>5</sup> *Proc. Soc. Antiq.* ii. 234-236 (2nd ser.), Hübner, No. 220, where they are figured. *Archæol. Journ.*, 1859, p. 88, and 1869, p. 68. Haddan and Stubbs, i. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Described in *Corp. Insc. Lat.* vii. 1330, 27, and in Hübner, No. 228, Allen, 77.

(8) At York, "fragmenta regulæ aeneæ in quorum uno," the Monogram.<sup>1</sup>

(9) Two silver rings at Fyfehead Neville in Dorsetshire.<sup>2</sup>

(C) The Aureole (an extended nimbus or circular glory, sometimes oval or elliptic) is found round the head of a human figure at Ilkley in Yorkshire.<sup>3</sup>

(D) Inscriptions. Would that there were something to record! Sadly does Professor Collins bewail that the British Church during this period left the very faintest traces of her existence, in brick or stone, in sculpture or inscription.<sup>4</sup> Professor Bright notes a gravestone recording that a "Christian man" slept below; but this would be certainly later.<sup>5</sup> It is often very difficult to decide whether an epitaph is Pagan or Christian, so many of the characteristics are identical, even many which hitherto have been supposed to differentiate them. In both we find omission of names and dates, epithets of tenderness, omission of rank, panegyric, conciseness, and solecisms; the features perhaps which stamp the Christian memorial being submission, hope, and confident belief in the resurrection and the life of the world to come. The heading D.M. (= Diis Manibus) is often probably to be

<sup>1</sup> Hübner, 218. Raine, *Catal. Mus. Ebur.* Well-beloved, *Handbook Antiq. York Mus.* 114. <sup>2</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant.* ix. 68.

<sup>3</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, i. 40.

<sup>4</sup> *Beginn. of Eng. Christianity*, 41.

<sup>5</sup> *Early Engl. Hist.* 11. It is figured, Hübner, No. 131. Found in the parish of Trawsfynydd. Cf. *Archæol. Cambr.*, 1848, p. 246. Haddan and Stubbs, i. 167.



found on a *Christian* tomb, the slabs being bought ready-made with that Pagan superscription, and often with no knowledge or thought of its real significance. The phrase *plus minus* used of a person's term of life on Christian tombstones abroad, appears on the fourth-century tombstone of Flavius Antigonus Papias at Carlisle; and on two tombstones at Brougham, also in Cumberland, which may be Christian.<sup>1</sup> But the limits of space have already been transgressed. It is hoped that a general idea may have been gained of the source of the stream of the English Church, this early witness for Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Many early inscriptions are extant with such formulæ as "Hic jacet," etc., *e. g.* one at Llanerfil in Montgomeryshire, which reads:—

"Hic in tumulo jacit R(e)sstice  
filia Paternini an(n) XIII. in  
pa(ce)."

This class of inscription dates  
from the fifth century.

Hic in
IVM < O IA
CIT RSSTE
CE FILIA PA
TERNINI
AN I XIII. IN
PA

The above marks the tomb of a Roman girl living in Britain after the withdrawal of the Roman legions.

Ample information about Rom. Brit. Inscriptions may be found in Horsley, *Brit. Romana*; Scarth's *Early Brit.* app. 4; McCaul, *Brit. Rom. Inscr.*; Haverfield, *Rom. Inscr.*; Wright, *Celt, Rom. and Sax.*; and Hübner, *Inscr. Britann. Christianæ*.

THE END

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